

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, BE

SUBJECT: NEW BELGIAN REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTED MOTOR

VEHICLES

REFS: BRUSSELS 4729; STATE A-7393

1. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEW GOB REGULATIONS (REFS) ON
IMPORTED AUTOMOBILE MODELS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN CERTIFIED BY
BELGIAN AUTHORITIES AS MEETING THEIR STANDARDS. THE
REQUIREMENT NOT ONLY TO BRING SUCH CARS INTO CONFORMITY WITH
BELGIAN STANDARDS BUT ALSO TO HAVE THEM TESTED IN BELGIUM
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WILL IMPOSE A GREAT EXPENSE ON MANY PRIVATE PERSONS WHO

WOULD PLAN TO BUY AMERICAN-MADE VEHICLES TO USE IN BELGIUM. IN FACT, THESE CAR BUYERS ARE LIKELY TO BE DISCOURAGED FROM BUYING MANY BRANDS OF U.S.-MADE AUTOMOBILES. USG PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO BELGIUM APPARENTLY ALSO ARE SUBJECT TO THE REGULATION AND WOULD BE AFFECTED SIMILARLY. A WAIVER PROVISION, WHICH WOULD APPLY TO CARS IN POSSESSION OF THE IMPORTING OWNER AT LEAST SIX MONTHS BEFORE ENTRY, WILL NOT ELIMINATE THE PROBLEM.

2. THE EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO REPLY TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER CONSULTING WHERE APPROPRIATE WITH BELGIAN OFFICIALS AND/OR BUSINESSMEN:

(A) WHAT STANDARDS ARE THE BELGIANS APPLYING WHICH A U.S.-MADE CAR MIGHT NOT MEET? ARE THEY IN ACCORD

WITH ECE STANDARDS?

(B) WHAT PROMPTED INTRODUCTION OF THESE NEW REGULATIONS?

(C) DOES THE REFERENCED INSPECTION CHARGE CONSIST OF INSPECTION COST ALONE OR DOES IT ALSO INCLUDE AN ESTIMATE OF OTHER COSTS NECESSARY TO BRING A NONE-CONFORMING CAR INTO CONFORMITY WITH BELGIAN AUTOMOBILE STANDARDS? IF INSPECTION ONLY IS INVOLVED, WHY IS THE COST ESTIMATED TO AMOUNT TO BETWEEN FIVE AND NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS?

(D) WHEN A CAR NOT CERTIFIED AS CONFORMING TO STANDARDS ENTERS BELGIUM, WHAT ARE THE STEPS WHICH ORDINARILY MUST BE TAKEN BETWEEN THE TIME OF ENTRY AND THE TIME WHEN CERTIFICATION OF THE VEHICLE, ONCE BROUGHT INTO CONFORMITY, IS MADE? MUST THE IMPORTER POST BOND AT THE TIME THE VEHICLE IS IMPORTED?

(E) IS ANY GENERAL WAIVER FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO CONFORM WITH STANDARDS GRANTED FOR (A) U.S. OFFICIAL CARS, (B) CARS BELONGING TO U.S. DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, (C) U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL EITHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH NATO OR ON OTHER ASSIGNMENT, AND (D) CARS BELONGING TO BUSINESSMEN TEMPORARILY LOCATED IN BELGIUM? U.S. REGULATIONS PROVIDE EXEMPTIONS FOR CASES (A) AND (B).

(F) DOES THE REGULATION MAKE ANY ALLOWANCE FOR ACCEPTING CERTIFICATION BY FOREIGN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS AS TO CONFORMITY WITH BELGIAN

STANDARDS?

(G) IS THE REGULATION APPLICABLE TO, AND DOES IT
AFFECT, CARS MANUFACTURED IN ALL COUNTRIES OUTSIDE
BELGIUM, INCLUDING OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE EURO-
PEAN COMMUNITIES?

3. ANY OTHER COMMENTS EMBASSY MAY OFFER, INCLUDING
SUGGESTIONS ON APPROACH THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN WITH GOB, ARE
WELCOME. PLEASE SEND THE TEXT OF THE BELGIAN REGULATION
TO WASHINGTON. KISSINGER

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